

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled)
2. (currently amended) The safety switch according to Claim ~~1~~ 4, wherein the semiconductor switch disconnects a vehicle consuming device from the vehicle battery after expiration of a defined time interval.
3. (currently amended) The safety switch according to Claim ~~1~~ 4, wherein the semiconductor switch disconnects a vehicle consuming device from the vehicle battery as a function of a charge condition of the battery.
4. (currently amended) ~~The safety switch according to Claim 1,~~
wherein A safety switch for preventing unintentional discharge of a vehicle battery, wherein:

said safety switch comprises a semiconductor switch; and

the semiconductor switch is a SenseFET.

5. (canceled).

6. (currently amended) ~~The method according to Claim 5,~~ A method for monitoring defects for the detection of excessive current consumption in a vehicle electric system, said method comprising:

using a semiconductor safety switch to monitor current consumption through a vehicle socket;

wherein said semiconductor safety switch comprises a SenseFET.

7. (canceled).

8. (currently amended) ~~The method according to Claim 7,~~ A method for monitoring quiescent current flowing in a motor vehicle, said method comprising:

using a semiconductor safety switch to monitor said current;

wherein said semiconductor safety switch comprises a SenseFET.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) Apparatus for preventing unintentional discharge of a vehicle battery, said apparatus comprising:

a semiconductor safety switch interruptibly coupling said battery to electric consuming devices on said vehicle; and

a programmable control unit for opening and closing said semiconductor safety switch as a function of a monitored ~~parameter~~. parameter;

wherein said semiconductor safety switch comprises a SenseFET.

11. (canceled).

12. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim ~~11~~ 10, wherein said control unit is programmed to control opening and closing of said semiconductor safety switch as a function of at least one of:

time elapsed following said vehicle ceases operation;

a charge state of said battery; and

current consumption of said vehicle socket.

13. (currently amended) ~~The apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein~~
Apparatus for preventing unintentional discharge of a vehicle battery, said
apparatus comprising:

a semiconductor safety switch interruptibly coupling said battery to
electric consuming devices on said vehicle; and

a programmable control unit for opening and closing said
semiconductor safety switch as a function of a monitored parameter; wherein,

said semiconductor safety switch is connected to selectively supply or
interrupt electric power from said battery to an electric socket of said vehicle, for
coupling said electric power to said consuming devices;

said semiconductor safety switch provides a bidirectional current flow
capability, whereby said vehicle battery can be charged via the vehicle ~~socket~~
socket; and

when a voltage applied to one of an output of said semiconductor safety
switch and an output of said battery exceeds a defined threshold value, said
safety switch allows a charging current to flow